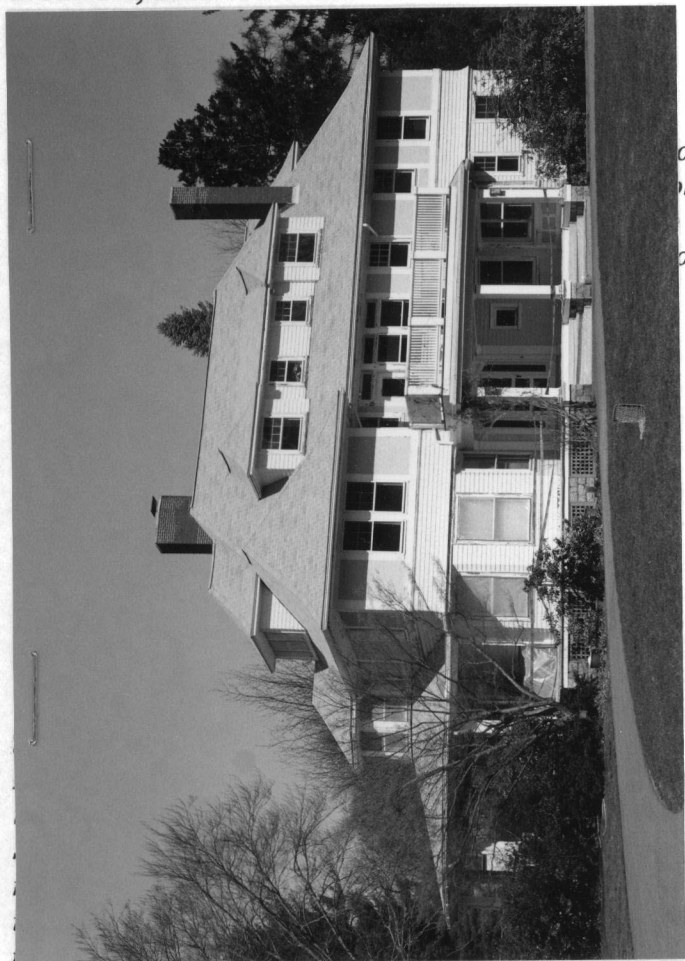


FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month / year) January 1998

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

006300077A

Boston N.

697

Town Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 8 Adams St.

Historic Name George O. Whiting/Gilmore House

Uses: Present Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction 1903

Source Schoenhut letter; Lexington Valuation lists

Style/Form Craftsman

Architect/Builder Willard D. Brown

Exterior Material:

Foundation Fieldstone

Wall/Trim Wood shingle and stucco

Roof Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures Garage

Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition Excellent

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date

Acreage 1.4 A.

Setting Set far back from a heavily-trafficked residential street in a neighborhood of 19th- and early 20th-century houses with later 20th-century infill

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

☒ *see continuation sheet*

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

8 Adams St. is one of the earliest examples of Willard Brown's work and one of the largest high-style Craftsman houses in Lexington. According to an architectural historian who has studied Brown's work, this house displays features that became characteristic of Brown's domestic architecture: a hillside site with a view (contemporary accounts say that Mt. Wachusett and the southern New Hampshire mountains could be seen on clear days, although the view is now obscured by trees), a circular drive, a house of substantial size with spacious rooms and ample service areas and servants' quarters, natural-color woodwork with simple Colonial Revival or Arts and Crafts detailing, Grueby tiles on the fireplace surrounds, and an hexagonal dining room.

This house is built on the foundation of an earlier Queen Anne house which burned (see Historical Narrative), but, in contrast to the vertical massing of that house, this one has strong horizontal lines. It is 2½ stories and basically rectangular in plan with many projecting bays and a large semi-circular porch at the south end, a hip roof with flared eaves, hip-roofed dormers, and two large interior chimneys. The walls, which flare outward at the base of the second story, are shingled up to the second story window sills and then stuccoed above with wooden timbers dividing the stucco into rectangular panels. The front entry porch is supported by square pilastered posts and surmounted by a balustrade. The doorway is topped by a segmental arch, a line repeated at the top of

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

☒ *see continuation sheet*

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

This house was built ca. 1903 to replace an earlier house on the site, which had been built in 1888 and burned on December 9, 1902. The earlier house, a large Queen Anne, had been started by Freeborn Raymond, a Lexington developer who lived on Massachusetts Avenue opposite what is now Grant St. When the house was almost finished, however, Mrs. Raymond decided she wouldn't live so far "out in the county," so the unfinished house was sold to George O. Whiting, who had previously lived at 22 Hancock St. Whiting became a wealthy man, president of the Wilton (N.H.) Railroad, C. Brigham Milk Co., and Elm Farm Milk Co. He was also a prominent citizen, serving in the early 20th century as president of the Lexington Savings Bank, chairman of the Cary Library Building Committee, president of the Lexington Field and Garden Club, and president of the Lexington Historical Society. The 1902 fire, which began in the framing behind the plaster walls and eventually consumed the entire house because inadequate pressure in the water mains prevented the fire department from extinguishing it, burned so slowly that almost all the contents was saved. Whiting decided to rebuild on the same site and gave the commission to Lexington architect Willard D. Brown.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

☒ *see continuation sheet*

Grady, Anne A. "The Architecture of Willard D. Brown." Paper submitted to AM 785, Boston University, 1986. On file at Lexington Historical Society, Lexington, MA.

Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington*. Revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society.. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913. 1: 295, 408, 484, 496; 2: 70-71.

Lexington Historical Society. *Lexington. A Hand-book of Its Points of Interest, Historical and Picturesque*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Historical Society, 1891. 50

Lexington Minute-man, 21 October, 1887, 17 Aug. 1888, 13 December 1902.

Lexington Valuation Lists. 1902-1904.

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

the door itself and at the tops of the sidelights, and flanked by square engaged pilastered columns. The design and massing of the rear elevation is, according to architectural historian Anne Grady, influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, especially the projecting hip-roofed center bay with tall windows on the second level and a band of shorter windows on the third. This bay also has a distinctive applied latticework on the stucco. The three-car stuccoed garage is hip-roofed.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued)

Willard Dalrymple Brown (1871–1944) grew up in Lexington, youngest son of a father who was a successful insurance agent, and graduated from Harvard in 1892 and from M.I.T. in architecture in 1894. From 1894 to 1902 Brown worked in the office of Boston architects Dwight and Chandler. In 1902 he set up his own office at 3 Park St. in Boston, moving it by 1906 to 15 Beacon St., where he remained for the rest of his career. The Whiting house was one of his first commissions. According to Anne Grady, an architectural historian who has studied Brown's work, he was influenced by the prevailing architectural theory of eclecticism, which, in his case, meant it was acceptable to build in any of a number of historical styles or to combine several styles in one building, and by the work of Frank Lloyd Wright (see Architectural Description above). The house was apparently completed in 1903 and was later occupied for many years by Whiting's daughter Jessie and her husband George Gilmore, which is the reason why it is sometimes known as the Gilmore House.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (continued)

Schoenhut, Sarah Emily Brown to Anne A. Grady, 13 March 1984. In possession of Anne A. Grady, Lexington, MA.
Worthen, Edwin B. to Mrs. Bruce Currie, 16 February 1951. Worthen Collection. Cary Library, Lexington, MA.
———. *A Calendar History of Lexington, Massachusetts, 1620–1946*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Savings Bank, 1946. 101

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Roll #8, Negative #25